

Incorporated October 20, 1988

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 3

LODI HISTORIAN

SUMMER 1994

METHODIST CHURCH

This article is a continuation from Lodi Historian Volume 5, Number 1.

The Lodi First Methodist Episcopal Church in 1882 had 67 members on the church roll and 109 members enrolled in the Sunday school. The church debt was entirely paid.

Rev. T.B. Palmer 1883-84, Rev. W.R. Gober 1885, and Rev. E.E. Dodge presided during hard times for Lodi Methodists as membership dropped to 60 and the church valuation fell from \$4,000 to \$2,000.

In September 1861 Thomas Palmer enlisted as a private in Company A 9th Kansas Cavalry. He was engaged in religious activities and, because of his efforts, public church services were held in the Civil War camp.

On advice of his doctor, Rev. Palmer came to California in 1875. While in Lodi Rev. Palmer and the Rev. William C. Stewart, of the Lodi Congregational Church, published in the Lodi Sentinel a joint article in the Lodi Sentinel concerning the disregard of local young men to the Sabbath.

They commented on the "Distressing and disgraceful conduct — young men by the dozens congregate on Sunday evening in front of saloons — boys in their teens swear like dragons, some of them even disturbing the church services by their unseemly noises. With hatless heads and disheveled hair and howling like dervishes, men in the early prime of manhood, and others whose locks are silvered by the frosts of many winters, reel in drunkenness through the streets. A large portion of your population, even including heads of families, are habitual neglectors of the sanctuary worship — children being raised without proper recognition in their homes of God and His law." These ministers requested that the public pause and consider the state



▲ Methodist Church between 1891-94:

Top Row: Rev. Winning.

2nd Row, from top: Mr. Wardrobe, Mrs. Winning, Donna Winning, Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Wm. Smith, Mrs. Villinger.

3rd Row: Mr. Rixon, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Reynolds (Mrs. Villinger's mother), Mrs. Burge, Mrs. Jesse Green, Mrs. Mary Ellen Tindell.

4th Row, from top: Mr. Burge, Mr. Burge's daughter, Mr. Miller, Mr. Dayton, Mrs. Dayton & unknown.

of affairs and urged the people of the community to unite with them in a week of prayer beginning on the following Sunday evening service at the Methodist Church.

H.E. Foster was the first layman from Lodi as a delegate to the annual conference September 21, 1883.

Daisy M. Pleas remembered that when she was twelve years old in 1884, the Methodist Sunday School had their annual picnic in May. Those attending boarded the S.J.S.N. narrow gauge and rode east to the end of the line, Wallace.

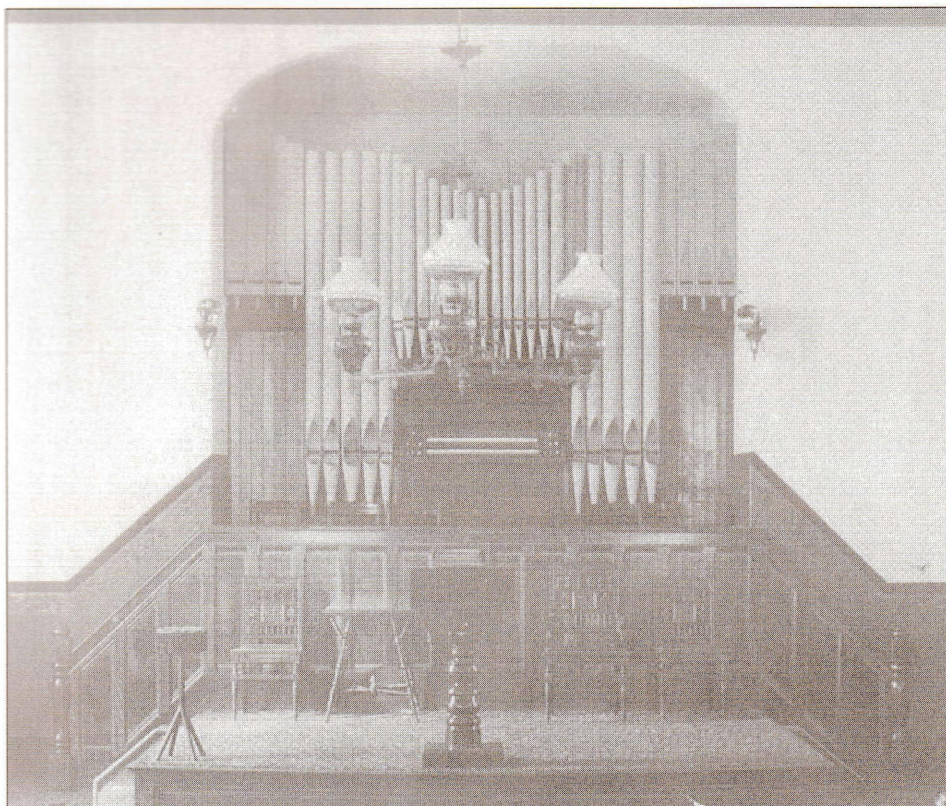
At the end of the day the picnic train arrived back in Lodi. Charlie, the young son

of Rev. and Mrs. Palmer, slipped and fell between the cars, and was killed, thus bringing a tragic conclusion to what was to have been a joyful excursion.

Reverend William Roland Gober followed Rev. Palmer in the Lodi Methodist Church. Rev. Gober was born in 1824 in Dekath County, Georgia. His parents were slave owners but the sons worked diligently along with the slaves.

In April 1885 the trustees of the Lodi Church sold the old Live Oak church property to the Live Oak Cemetery Association.

In May 1885, Susie Gober, daughter of Reverend and Mrs. Gober, was selected by



▲ The pipe organ Rev. Jones built and took when he left Lodi.

the president and faculty of the University of the Pacific at San Jose to deliver the Master's oration at the commencement exercises on June 4th. This was the first time in the history of the University such an honor had been given a lady. At this graduation Susie D. Gober and her brother, Dr. Robert P. Gober had the degree of A.B. conferred on them.

During Reverend Dodge's ministry in Lodi, 1885-1886:

The membership at this time was 62 and the church was out of debt. W.J. Rixon was mentioned as a layman, and local preacher. One interesting affair has been preserved for posterity.

A maize social was given on a Friday evening in August of 1886 by the Ladies Aid Society of the Methodist Church assisted by members of the Bric-a-Brac Society.

The social took place at Barnhart's Hall located next to the old Lodi Hotel on Sacramento Street. Admission was free. The hall had been decorated under the direction of Mrs. Charles Ivory and tables had been set for a banquet in Green's store near at hand. The following program was offered for the evening's entertainment:

Solo & Chorus:
"Just Before the Battle Mother"

Recitation:
"The Blue and the Gray" — Carrie Ivory

Instrumental Duet:
Rebecca & Clara Kettleman

Solo & Chorus:
"Who Will Care for Mother Now?"

Reading:
Hattie McClung

Vocal Duet with Chorus:
"Brave Boys Are They"

Instrumental Duet:
(Cornet and Piano)
Miss Mamie Brubaker & Geo. Lawrence

Recitation:
"The Georgia Volunteer" — Maggie Ellis

Instrumental Duet:
Carrie Ivory and Maggie Ellis

Solo & Chorus:
"Tenting Tonight on the
Old Camp Ground"

Reverend Seneca Jones, Jr. came to Lodi in September 1886 to replace Rev. Dodge.

The Rev. Jones' father was also a minister and his uncle was the famous Evangelist, Edward Inskip.

The Lodi Sentinel, in the issue of October 2, 1886, speaks well indeed of

Lodi's new Methodist preacher. "Reverend Jones, Lodi's new pastor of the M.E. Church seems to be about as active and as interesting a minister as the conference boasts of. In a sort of easy, unintentional way he has bowed himself at once into the cordial favor of his church, society and the community.

He is a preacher among a hundred and the Lodi charge is fortunate, indeed, for his appointment to this place."

Again in November 1886 the Lodi Sentinel comments: "Reverend Jones preached Thanksgiving sermon at M.E. Church on Thursday — appropriate and eloquent — Mr. Jones could not preach an inferior sermon if he tried to, at least he has not yet shown us that he has the ability to tax the patience of a congregation."

William Moore was lay delegate from the Lodi church in 1887.

In March of the same year one of the young sons of Reverend Jones went into the barn back of the church with a bunch of matches and built a fire which soon spread throughout the structure. The building and its contents were destroyed but the boy, fortunately, escaped injury.

Reverend Jones, upon building an organ, had an organ loft added to the church. The church was redecorated, the altar was removed and a new platform built. The balcony was taken from over the door and the pastor's study was made a part of the auditorium. Also, the seats were rearranged.

The Lodi Weekly News tells of the "Successful introduction of the new organ at the M.E. Church" on the evening of February 17, 1888. The affair was attended by a large crowd which was curious and interested in hearing the organ made by Reverend Jones.

"The organ is the most striking object that greets the entering visitor. The case work is of red cedar and redwood and finished in oil and shellac. The front pipes are decorated in harmony with the finish of the

▼ Ticket to the Grand Organ Concert.



►
Intermediate
League
Superintendent
E.F. Van Vlear and
Mrs. Van Vlear,
third from left.



church. On a French gray ground are stenciling of a neat pattern in azure blue and gold." The organ itself was said to have a fine quality of tone. The following program was rendered:

Opening solo arranged and played by Charles E. Owen. Anthem — "Israel's Sons With One Accord" by the choir assisted by May Stevens. "Music and Her Sister Song," rendered by Emma McSherry and Mrs. T.W. Boalt. Bass Solo — "Thy Sentinel Am I," by W.C. Green. A trio — "O Restless Sea," by Messrs. R. Hughes, F.E. Ellis and T.W. Boalt.

In order to supplement, Seneca Jones became a professional photographer and his son, Gilbert became celebrated as a singer.

The San Joaquin County history book of 1890 mentioned Reverend Jones as a genius and independent thinker as well as a scholar and a gentleman.

The membership was 70 and the debt \$600 when Rev. Jones left Lodi for Woodland. He took the organ with him.

Rev. Jonathan L. Mann was born in North Carolina in 1839 and at age 21 joined a Southern Methodist Episcopal Conference. Two years later he, with about thirty others, were expelled by Bishop Early for refusing to pray for Jefferson Davis and had to flee for safety. Negroes hid and fed him until he reached the Union army in Virginia. He later wrote a book about his experience when he was appointed chaplain of the Ninth Tennessee Cavalry in 1863. He gave his time unremittingly to waiting upon and looking after the comfort of the sick and wounded soldiers. He won the respect of all

with whom he served including his commanding officer, Col. John Brownlow.

Rev. Mann came to California in 1875 and was stationed at San Diego. There he buried his wife.

Three years later he married a widow, Mrs. Ella Smith who was teaching music at the College of Pacific at San Jose. During the same year Jonathan Mann's boy, Oscar, passed on at the age of ten. Seven years later the daughter, Hortense, passed on at the age of twelve.

The late Mrs. Florence Sinks described Rev. Mann as tall, slender, and wearing a beard. His wife Ella had red hair, was a talented woman, musician, painter, had a rare poise of body and mind. She was a truly noble woman adorned with a Christian grace acquired only by living the divine precepts.

Reverend Eli Arthur Winning followed Rev. Mann at the Lodi church in 1891.

He was born in the state of Pennsyl-

vania, November 20, 1839. On April 18, 1861 he married Miss Esther Landon. Soon after, he enlisted in the Civil War and was attached to the 15th regiment, acting as regimental postmaster. He took part in the March to the Sea, the campaign of the Carolinas and was under fire at the Siege of Savannah.

After the war he received an honorable discharge from the Army.

In September 1891, Reverend E.A. Winning was appointed to Lodi. He found the charge in a low condition with but a few young people in it. An Epworth League was formed and a charter secured, but at the end of the year Lodi had only 52 members.

1892 started with a lot of hope. A new barn was built. The church was re-roofed on the south side.

Rev. and Mrs. Winning were the parents of four sons, Archie O., Charles E., Ralph, and Ernest B., who became pastor at the Lockeford Methodist church in 1894,



▲ Berean Bible Class: Mrs. G.W. Hill, President; Mrs. W.E. Wagner, Secretary; Mrs. Cora Shafer, Treasurer; and Mrs. Jenine Ruff, teacher.

and three daughters, Donna, Bertha and Maud. The last two were nieces of Mrs. Winning and adopted in infancy.

It was Maud who married Mr. Gerlach who later related a couple of incidents which occurred while she was a child in Lodi.

It was customary for Mrs. Winning to get a good fire going in the wood stove on Sunday morning, put the dinner on to cook and then go to Sunday School. After Sunday School she would go home and check on the dinner, then return to church. On one particular occasion she went home as usual after Sunday School and returned to church, walking down the aisle with a dignified mien, wearing a hat and also her kitchen apron. It brought forth smiles from the entire congregation.

At another time, a chicken dinner had

ministers did not fare too well as far as salaries were concerned. Members of the congregation took it upon themselves to contribute towards the support of the minister and his family by individual contributions of one sort or another. A revealing list of such contributions to the Eli Winning family has survived as an example of sacrificial giving by members of the church.

The following donations were received at the Lodi parsonage in February 1894:

P.T. Tindell	Apples
Mrs. Warren	Milk
Clara Bishop	Sauerkraut
Mrs. Dayton	Quinces
Mrs. Philippi	Blackberries
Mrs. Archer	Peaches
J.B. Lillie	Honey

As a follow-up to the above, it has been

He was succeeded by Rev. Lorenzo Fellers, a school teacher before feeling the call of God in his middle life.

Rev. Fellers and his wife Minnie were able to increase the Sunday School and membership to 123 in four years.

The next minister, James Jeffrey, a native of Cornwall, England arrived in California in 1880 and worked for awhile in a mine in Chile Gulch where 500 men were employed. With the exception of himself, there wasn't a single professing Christian among them. A great desire to see these men converted influenced him to the extent that he formed a Bible class. The men became interested and urged him to preach to them. This he did, and his first convert was the superintendent of the mine, Mr. Skinner. After preaching on a certain occasion,



◀
*Helping Hand
Bible Class:
W.E. Shipman, teacher
(behind little girl);
B. Porter, Assistant;
C.C. Houston, President;
L.P. Woodward,
Secretary; and G.W.
Hill, Vice President.*

been put in the oven, but on returning from church, it had disappeared. It was at this time that Coxe's wandering army passed through town and it was generally supposed that one or more of these men could have told where the chicken went.

An epidemic of diphtheria visited Lodi in the fall of 1892. Their daughter Bertha died October 27th and their youngest son, Ralph, age 17, died November 13th with diphtheria. This, for the time, broke up Sunday School and church and nothing could be done until after Christmas because the people were panic-stricken and the parsonage quarantined. They did not recover from this until April. They then planned for a camp meeting which was held in Villinger's Grove where a large number were converted.

In the early days of the local church,

found that for February 1894, the pastor received the munificent sum of \$32.00 and in April of the same year he didn't do so well, receiving \$24.85 for his labors. It isn't likely that many of the ministers and their families suffered from obesity.

During Eli Winning's stay in Lodi, Minor Burge, one of the prominent church members, passed away. He was 83 years of age when he succumbed on March 1, 1894.

He was one of the first on the Board of Trustees and continued in that office until 1893.

During Rev. Winning's pastorate the Sunday School showed quite an increase and the pastor gave credit to the faithful teachers and especially the superintendent E.F. Van Vlear.

Rev. Winning ended his three years with 74 members in Lodi and eight in Acampo.

Mr. Skinner approached him saying, "I want you to come to my room." Here he stated that he wanted to become a follower of Jesus Christ. It was only about six months after the superintendent's conversion that he passed on.

While at Lodi, Rev. Jeffrey's health became a source of concern as he had contracted consumption. He fought the disease valiantly but was forced by ill health to leave the pastorate. A young student, Frank A. Lamb, completed the last five months of 1901 for Jeffrey. 43 members were lost in the last two years.

Mr. Lamb resumed his studies at Stanford University.

On September 21, 1901, three days prior to the arrival of Rev. Hugh Copeland to take over the pastorate of the M.E. Church of Lodi, there was a memorial ser-

►
The Epworth League
entertained by
Mr. and Mrs. Detrefoen
at their home in honor
of their son, Carleton's
birthday, June 14, 1907



vice held at the church. The service was held in memory of the recently assassinated United States President McKinley.

The members of the grand Army of the Republic met at Odd Fellows Hall, and, led by a cornet band, marched to the Methodist Church.

The meeting was opened by President McKinley's favorite hymn, "Lead Kindly Light." Miss Geraldine Ferrel from San Francisco, but a frequent visitor to Lodi, sang "Come Ye Disconsolate." R.J.W. Brier led in prayer and also made the memorial speech. The meeting came to a close with the singing of "America," and the benediction.

The church was crowded to the doors for the occasion and many were not able to obtain admittance. Thus Reverend Copeland arrived in Lodi at a time when the entire country was mourning the loss of their president.

During the ministry of Reverend Copeland in Lodi, a young people's literary society was organized in February of 1902 with these officers in charge:

President Will Norton
Vice President Fay Fleming
Secretary Nellie Hill
Treasurer Oscar Pope

This group was an auxiliary of the Epworth League.

In just one year Rev. Copeland added 43 names to the Sunday School.

Francis Joseph Hindson's ministry in Lodi extended from 1902-1904.

Born in 1853 in Grimsby, Ontario Canada, he was converted at a revival conducted by the Methodists in his home town when he was a lad of 14.

He left home at an early age and, forsaking religious influences, wandered about



Methodist Church, after 1910 enlargement to the north.

the country at last moving to Mendocino County in California. Here, at meetings conducted by Reverend Bert Jones, he renewed his relations with God and at once took a leading position in the town as a Christian worker. He organized Cottage Prayer Service, Sunday Schools, Christian Endeavor Societies, and, by his personal efforts and prayers, led many to Christ.

He moved to Anderson Valley where he became a blacksmith. It is recorded that "He worked by the forge and studied the

scriptures." His Bible was fastened above the forge, held in place by horse-shoe nails, and while his hands were busy with blacksmith work, his eye was often upon the word. Sunday was his great day. He frequently traveled the distance of thirty miles or more to lead a class or superintend a Sunday School, and at the close of each session gave them a good gospel exhortation. In redwood logging camps an audience of more than 200 men often greeted him and gladly listened to his earnest preaching.

During Rev. Hindson's last year in Lodi his health began to deteriorate. His life was one of self-sacrifice. He knew difficulties, and met them heroically, only living one year after leaving Lodi.

Reverend Weldon Pollock Grant served the Lodi Methodist Church from 1904 to 1909.

The town made a large growth in this period and so did the church ... one hundred seventy-seven new members in five years.

Grant had a special gift of improving church property whenever possible. For a cost of \$2,000, the old building was extended twenty feet in width.

Rev. Grant was a trustee of the Lodi library while in Lodi and was able to help secure a Carnegie grant for the new building.

Edwin Grant, son of Rev. and Mrs. Grant married Bessie Swallow, daughter of Lodi's first librarian. Edwin became active



1910-1911
Daisy Plea's Sunday
School Class:

*On porch: Maurice Hill.
Back Row, l to r: Walter
Tindell, Henry Hawkins.
Front Row: Homer Wilson,
Richard Caple and
Edward Atwood.*

in California politics and served as senator in the state legislature from 1912-1914. He was instrumental in putting through the red light abatement law.

The new pastor in 1910 was Earnest Brewster Winning, son of the former minister, E.A. Winning.

In 1894 Rev. E.B. Winning was a young man in the ministry and was pastoring three small Methodist churches located in Lockeford, Clements and Burson. During the same year he married Emma Tretheway, daughter of George. Her uncle, John, owned the Tretheway's Oak Grove, a popular place for Sunday School picnics.

While pastoring in Lockeford, Rev. Winning published a small newspaper, "Our Paper," a weekly containing local and church news from both Lockeford and Lodi where his father served.

In waging war against sin in general, he wrote some articles in his paper headed "The Dance," which drew forth some unfavorable editorial comments from Lodi newspapers.

The Lodi Methodist Church was still growing during Rev. E.A. Winning's years. Emil Spiekerman, superintendent of the Sunday School had a gain of 89 during this period.

It was necessary to excavate under the north side of the church for a basement room. A new parsonage was added west of

the sanctuary.

Ruth Winning Warner, daughter of the Winning's, related some history at a later date about the family stay in Lodi.

Rev. and Mrs. Winning had Harry Lauder, noted Scotch singer, as a guest at the parsonage and he gave concerts in the Sunday School rooms located in the church basement. Reverend Winning designed these rooms and the larger assembly room and had them built. She stated, also, that during her father's pastorate in Lodi, the new parsonage was built, the old one being moved further down on Oak Street. At the time the parsonage was being constructed, the Winnings lived in the little white cottage

on the S.W. corner of School and Oak Streets which belonged to an elderly lady by the name of Mrs. Sarah Burge.

Maurice Hill and Ruth played together as children and one day they conceived the idea of playing church and that in order to carry out the idea as fully as possible, Maurice suggested taking up a collection. Hence, a bit later, when Rev. Winning chanced to be passing by, Ruth was sitting on the church steps with a plate extended for donations from the public in general. Upon finding out who was the originator of this "brilliant" idea, Maurice was told summarily to go home.

In 1912, while Rev. Winning was still pastor of the local church, Nellie Hill, who sang in the church choir along with her mother, Mary and Aunt Daisy Pleas, passed on while under the age of thirty.

The services were held at the church. It was preceded by a unique processional feature which probably never occurred in Lodi, previously or since. Six young lady friends of Nellie carried the white casket from the home to the church, about a one-block distance. The young ladies were dressed in white. The relatives followed behind. It was evidently known about the town that there would be this unusual procession and the street was lined with people from the home to the church.



Ladies of the Lodi Methodist Choir, April 19, 1910. Top row, l to r: Daisy Pleas, Mrs. Olcott, Mrs. Ernest Winning, Mrs. May Willms, Vera McCleary. Lower Row: Mrs. Scoggins, Mrs. Flora Randolph, Mrs. G.W. Hill, Grace Smith (party given in her honor as she was to leave for her home in Nebraska), Martha Rinn. Jessie McCall, choir director, in front. Picture taken by Nellie Hill.

Fred Keast was born in St. Agnes, Cornwall, England on August 17, 1869. Through the influence of the Salvation Army he became a convert at the age of sixteen and soon he began preaching. He felt the call to the ministry but, not yielding to it, he went to South Africa with the idea of pursuing a career as a mining engineer. However, in time he returned to England and from there he came to Grass Valley, California. At this time he became convinced that he should follow the call of God to the ministry.

The Rev. Fred A. Keast stayed five years in Lodi and with the active work of people like Mr. and Mrs. W. Clark the Sunday School grew to nearly 500 names.

The Lodi Methodist church needed a new church but the world war with Germany took up all the effort.

They had to wait



▲ Hills Jewelry Store, 5 N. Sacramento St., 1918-1920. Rev. Bradner of the Methodist Church left of showcase. Back of showcase: G.W. Hill, Proprietor; Daisy M. Pleas and Leona Tarbell.

until 1917 when Rev. Edward John Bradner appeared on the scene.

It was during Reverend Bradner's ministry in Lodi that a new church was built on the southwest corner of W. Oak and Church Streets, in 1920. The previous church building had stood for many years on the northwest corner of W. Oak and S. School Streets.

On June 10, 1919 the ground breaking for the new edifice took place. The Methodist church's only living charter member, George W. Hill, lifted the first shovelful of soil. Mr. Hill at this time was chairman of the board of trustees.

The corner stone was laid September 7, 1919 and the following day the first bricks were laid.

The Sunday School's helpful project was for members to bring bricks on a particular Sunday, later to be incorporated in the structure. Bruce DeVenny brought a wheelbarrow full.

The architect was W.J. Wythe and the contractor, T.A. Cuthbertson for a price of \$37,700. This does not include \$6,000 for the organ and the revolving electric cross.

Trustees at this time: John Willms, G.W. Berding, W. Shipman, DeVenny and

◀ Brick Sunday: Bruce DeVenny's wheelbarrow; Francis Ruff, lower right.





Methodist Ground Breaking, June 2, 1919.
Left to right: E.F. Van Vlear, Rev. E.J. Bradner, and Sunday School Superintendent E.A. Spiekerman with shovel.

L.T. Mason. On the building committee were: Pastor Bradner, R.H. DeVinny, Porter Gray, W.E. Wagner, E.F. Van Vlear and Ernest West.

Stewards included Melber Ayers, W.R. Troutner, John Lehman, George and Joan Field, Ida Rinn, Mrs. Tindel and Mrs. J. Hatton.

Women were also on the gymnasium board, Martha Rinn and Mrs. Van Vlear.

A social hall was built at the same time. In 1920 Methodist church membership was 511 and the Sunday School 534.



Corner stone laying, Sept. 7, 1919.
Left to right: Jacob Harris, R.H. DeVinny, G.W. Hill, W.S. Clark, and E.F. Van Vlear.

The Lodi Historian

is a quarterly publication of the Lodi Historical Society
P.O. Box 264, Lodi, CA 95241-0264

* Ralph Lea Editor
Lucy Reller Assistant Editor
* Charles Stenson Editorial Assistant

Officers

Nancy Schmer President
Bud Reller 1st Vice President
Susanne Benbrook 2nd Vice President
Janice Roth Treasurer
* Esther Bender Recording Secretary
* Jean Kettleman Corresponding Secretary

Board of Directors

Jean Bedford	Anne Meyers
Lynn Benbrook	Barbara Peden
* Evelyn Hasbaum	* Walter Scott
Ralph Lea	Del Smith
* Howard Mason	* Violet Stenson
Hugh Metcalf	Bing Taylor
* Gladys Mettler	

History Committee

Howard Mason and Ralph Lea, Co-Chairmen
Frances Scott • Vesta Mason • Ellen Edwards • Lucy Reller

*History Committee Member
All rights to republication are reserved.
Permission to quote or use material herein should be obtained in writing.

References

First Methodist Episcopal Church
1870-1920 • Lodi, California
First Methodist Episcopal Church of Lodi, CA
1853-1958 • Francis Ayers
Lodi Sentinel
Lodi's First Church (unpublished)
by Maurice Hill